

A Message From the Director



Mitch Katz, M.D.

This is my last message to you as Director of the Department of Health Services. But I remain the Director of the Health Agency, and will continue to communicate with you in that role until I leave for New York City around the end of the year. Thank you to all of the people who emailed me, or came up to me, to wish me well. The biggest surprise of making my announcement, was how many people in DHS and the Agency have or are taking care of their parents. I realize it is something we don't talk about as much as we talk about our children. In the past two years, as the health of my parents has deteriorated, I still responded when anyone asked me about my family: Max is doing great—he's 15 and 6 feet tall and still sweet. Roxie is 13 and loves to surf and still wakes up every morning singing. I haven't talked nearly as much about how torn I felt about my parents being in New York without sufficient help. I learned in sending out my message how many of you have struggled with this same issue. Many people told me that they understood why I was leaving because it meant so much to them to care for their parents on a daily basis. Others, in situations like mine, spoke of the heartbreak of having aging parents far away. I think as a community we need to talk more about how we care for our parents, and how challenging it is to be in the sandwich generation of young children and aging parents. I have tremendous confidence in Dr. Christina Ghaly, who is now the Acting Director of DHS. She is smart, hard-working, and a very caring physician. She and I worked together on the inpatient service at LAC+USC so I watched her in action taking care of patients. Meanwhile, I will be supporting her and the Directors of Public Health and Mental Health for the next several months. Best wishes.

Hope Reigns at Hill

By Michael Wilson



Dr. Astrid Heger (left) receives a scroll from LA County Supervisor Hilda Solis to commemorate the opening the Leonard Hill Hope Center. Also pictured is Dr. Patricia Gordon, founder of CureCervicalCancer and widow of Leonard Hill.

A safe-haven for teens to gain footing as they transition to adulthood opened with fanfare on September 14 as the latest project from the Violence Intervention Program (VIP). Steven Spielberg, Kate Capshaw, Sally Field and David and Rosanna Arquette were among the celebrity benefactors present at the grand opening. The Leonard Hill Hope Center is housed in a newly-renovated 12,000 square foot building near LAC+USC Medical Center. The space will house a range of services for foster youth and at-risk teens including career counseling, mental health, mentoring and tutoring, peer support, life-building skills, housing assistance, and areas for artistic expression. The Center aims to address the special needs of a vulnerable population at a critical point in their lives. The expansive interior features computer labs, social areas, original art from a private collection, a designer kitchen where youth can learn cooking skills, and private study areas.

The project is a partnership with the Leonard Hill Charitable Foundation, named for the prolific Hollywood writer, producer and friend of pediatrician and VIP executive director Dr. Astrid Heger, who praised Hill's commitment to making a difference during his lifetime. According to data provided by VIP, foster youth moving out of the county system face sobering odds: 45% will be homeless and living on the streets, 46% will not graduate high school, and 50% of females will be pregnant or already have a child. L.A. County Supervisor Hilda Solis and Health Agency director Dr. Mitch Katz described VIP as a beacon of hope, saying the Hope Center will make a real difference in the lives of children and their families in surrounding communities. "This is an amazing place that speaks to the county's commitment to break silos," said Katz, "and take care of children through great healthcare and by giving them a voice." Heger, a national expert in child

(See 'HOPE' on back)

Mobile Clinic Adds Stop in Echo Park

By Michael Wilson

The LAC+USC Breathmobile is adding a new stop in Echo Park starting in November thanks to a new partnership with Barlow Respiratory Hospital and the L.A. Unified School District. Every six weeks the van will park at Barlow Hospital to screen and treat children with asthma who are enrolled at nearby Logan and Castelar elementary schools. Services will include pulmonary function testing, allergy skin testing, medications and education. Barlow Hospital has been a fixture of the Chavez Ravine since 1903 when it opened as a tuberculosis sanatorium. Medical director Dr. David Nelson said the area has a higher incidence of asthma and getting kids into early treatment can impact their life-long health. The Breathmobile was created in 1995 to improve preventative asthma care for underserved children in the county. The program is based at LAC+USC Medical Center and run by the Department of Pediatrics.

(See 'MOBILE' on back)



Representatives from the LAC+USC Medical Center Breathmobile program, L.A. Unified School District, and Barlow Respiratory Hospital joined families and Dodger great Al Ferrara, Jr. at a ribbon-cutting to kick off the partnership on September 16. The Breathmobile will make regular visits to Barlow Hospital to serve kids with asthma in neighboring elementary schools.

(‘HOPE’)



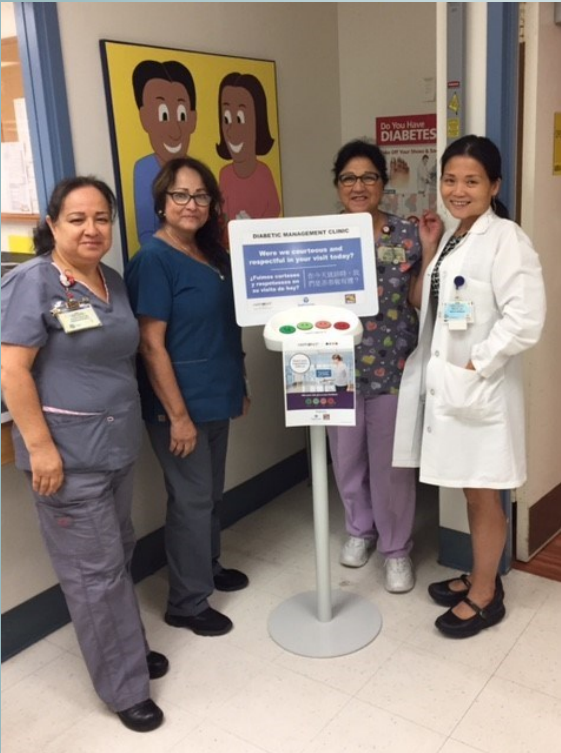
abuse, said providers should resist moral indifference where needs exist, recalling an exchange with a patient that inspired the Center’s name. When she asked a young patient what she could to help her, the patient said, “give me hope.” Large paintings of VIP youth by actress Kate Capshaw hang on inside walls – an intentional plan, Heger said, to make the kids she sees who are often invisible or out of sight “memorable and visible.” The Center will also provide mental health services to clients served at a new LGBTQ youth medical clinic on the LAC+USC campus. The VIP was founded more than 30 years ago and is a leader in creating transformative programs that raise the standards of care for high risk and vulnerable populations in Los Angeles County. The VIP serves more than 19,000 clients each year who have experienced abuse, neglect or violence.



Satisfaction Kiosks Coming to ACN Clinics

By Juan Ortega

Patients seeking care in DHS clinics will soon be able to share their experience by tapping a face on a kiosk. The Ambulatory Care Network (ACN) and Martin Luther King Jr. Outpatient Center (MLK) are launching a new patient experience and employee engagement pilot that is the brainchild of the Service Excellence Sub-Committee of the Labor Management Transformation Council (LMTCC). This joint effort aims to nurture a culture of partnership in service excellence. The HappyOrNot kiosks feature a screen where a single question can be viewed in multiple languages; patients respond by tapping the emoji-style happy or unhappy face that best reflects their experience. Because it’s quick and simple, HappyOrNot kiosks get a high response rate and results are available the next day in easy to read tables that will be available to everyone. Immediate and transparent feedback from the HappyOrNot kiosks will be great, but it’s only a starting point. As the ACN and MLK roll out the kiosks, they will be paired with other efforts to engage both patient and employees in problem solving to improve patient and staff experiences. View a product demonstration here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cg8y-3X1SKc>



‘Just Culture’ Focus of Town Hall



Health Agency leaders joined labor partners at a Town Hall session on August 30 to herald the rollout of ‘Just Culture’ across the three departments. The Health Agency is adopting Just Culture principles of kindness and fairness to build a more accountable, happier, productive and safe workplace. The new policy will impact over 30,000 combined employees. Agency leaders said Just Culture was critical for healthy system transformation and that employees should feel motivated to come to work every day and do their best work, knowing that as long as they do their best, they will be supported when adverse events or mistakes happen in the course of business. A Just Culture strikes a balance between human and system accountability that encourages open reporting of ‘near misses’ to establish a strong safety culture. Incidents are viewed within a matrix that factors in the role of system problems, and an employee’s actions, so that safety incidents can be resolved equitably. “It’s about coming together to create a work environment where we all thrive and the people we are in service of benefit because we are all able to do our best work, and we can’t do that unless we create a genuine learning community,” said L.A. County Department of Public Health director Dr. Barbara Ferrer. A team from the MLK Outpatient Center presented a skit applying Just Culture concepts to a real workplace incident. Participants also watched an SEIU-produced video of supervisors and front-line workers from DMH, DPH and DHS discussing Just Culture merits. Training sessions are underway for managers and front-line staff. To view the session, [click here](#).

(‘MOBILE’)

“We strive to keep kids out the emergency room and in school,” says Dr. Marilyn Li, associate professor of Pediatrics, Keck School of Medicine of USC. “This partnership with the Breathmobile and Barlow Respiratory Hospital will allow us to serve two schools at a centralized location and improve local community health.” Every patient receives care at no cost to the families. If patients cannot afford medications, sample medications are provided when available. Having the Breathmobile mobile clinics allow students and families to access clinic services in their own community and decreases length of time required for school absences and parental work absences.

